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# THEATRE WORLD



Angus McBean

## “Madam Butterfly”

A dramatic scene from the Sadler's Wells Opera Company's production of *Madam Butterfly*, with Victoria Sladen as Madam Butterfly. A long season opened at Sadler's Wells Theatre on Boxing Day, and the operas to be given during the first few weeks are *The Bartered Bride*, *Madam Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rigoletto* and *The Barber of Seville*. *Peter Grimes*, the Benjamin Britten opera which was a sensational success last season, comes back into the repertory in February, with Joan Cross and Peter Pears as guest artists, and three new productions will be given later in the season.



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Edited by Frances Stephens

**January, 1946**

**Over the Footlights**

**WE** look back on a memorable year, for 1945, which brought us victory, also saw the theatre in this country consolidate its wartime triumphs. The six months of peace have brought no slacking of interest in the drama, and the London theatres have enjoyed unprecedented prosperity, so much so that it seemed at one time that the West End might be without the traditional pantomime at Christmas. However, theatres were found for two favourites, *Cinderella* and *Aladdin*, and four other Christmas shows for the children (which will be reviewed next month).

Prominent in the year was the big new triumph of the Old Vic Theatre Company, who, with their second season at the New, have continued to make theatrical history.

We rejoice, too, that the coming of peace did not in any way curtail the activities of C.E.M.A. (now the Arts Council). On the contrary, there seems to be no limit to the possible developments of this movement. No time has been lost in putting new plans into operation, and we dare to hope that this nation has at last come to realise the importance of the drama in its cultural life.

In spite of the theatre shortage, the year saw some excellent productions. Outstanding memories of 1945, apart from unforgettable experiences at the New Theatre, were Vivien Leigh in *The Skin of Our Teeth* (happily returning in the New Year), Isabel Jeans in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Robert Morley in *The First Gentleman*, Emrys Jones in *The Hasty Heart* and Cicely Courtneidge in *Under the Counter*. Another moving performance came from Robert Beatty in *A Bell for Adano*, a play with a war angle, which with *The Assassin*,

did not catch the public fancy like Daphne du Maurier's *The Years Between*, Warren Chetham Strode's *Young Mrs. Barrington*, and *The Hasty Heart*.

*Duet for Two Hands* was our favourite thriller of the year, and *The Cure for Love* and *Lady from Edinburgh* two likeable comedies. *See How They Run* was a most riotous farce.

Emlyn Williams struck a new note with his moving play *The Wind of Heaven*.

Foremost among the musicals were Ivor Novello's *Perchance to Dream*, that delightful rendering of *Die Flödermaus*, namely, *Gay Rosalinda*, *Three Waltzes* and the mammoth revue *The Night and the Music*, which reminds us that November 5th saw the first peace time Command Performance, at the Coliseum.

Though produced just before the end of 1944, we shall also carry in our memories for 1945 the incomparable Lunts in Terence Rattigan's *Love in Idleness*.

Big event in the opera world was Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, which has already earned something of a world-wide reputation.

Space does not allow of more than a passing reference to the achievements at the little theatres; the Mercury, the Arts, the Lindsey, the Gateway, the Torch and many others where the fundamental work for drama is being done. During the year, too, the Embassy Theatre has come back into its own, and the Company of Four, at the Lyric, Hammersmith, is successfully launched on its live policy.

All this is but a corner of the picture, multiplied a score of times up and down the country, where the professional and repertory theatres flourish as never before. We shall not forget 1945. F.S.

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# New Shows of the Month



## "The Sacred Flame"

**T**HIS Somerset Maugham revival, superbly cast, provides some of the finest acting in Town. The play, with its dramatic situation, is as topical to-day as in 1929, when it first posed the problem of the crashed and invalided airman, the love affair between his wife and his brother and the burning devotion of his mother and nurse.

Mr. Maugham does not shirk the issue. He provides no easy and conventional solutions to his human tragedies, which is why his work retains its power to grip. In this case the mysterious death of the hopeless invalid provides the suspense, admirably sustained, and for the rest, the author demonstrates that life is scarcely ever a question of right and wrong, but of the choice of wrongs, the arriving at the lesser evil.

As the Mother and Nurse, Mary Hinton and Sonia Dresdel are magnificent; the former for her poise and restrained acting, the latter for a restraint that suggests a hidden volcano. Miss Dresdel acts first of all with her face and her hands; in this part she uses them to the full to convey the suppressed emotion of a sex-starved woman who has lost the love of her life. Mary Martlew plays the wife and Ian Lubbock the young airman doomed to life-

long helplessness, and Donald Strachan, Ronald Millar, Gordon McLeod and Pat Clarence are equally well cast. F.S.

## "Under the Counter"

**C**ICELY Courtneidge scores the big triumph of her career in this delicious comedy by Arthur Macrae, with music by Manning Sherwin. The accent is on comedy, and in a show that uses a new technique, Miss Courtneidge demonstrates her many-sided genius as comedienne as never before.

There is a story to the piece and a reason for everything that happens, which is a refreshing change from conventional musical comedy. Jo Fox, an actress, in between rehearsing herself and the chorus for her new show in her luxurious home, dabbles extensively in the black market. She also hopes by similar methods to get her hero (Cyril Raymond) transferred from his military duties on the continent to be near her in London, and thereby gets involved with a boorish but susceptible Cabinet Minister, (Hartley Power) and his song-writing secretary (Thorley Waters). Jeanne Stuart, all Parisian and chic, provides Jo with a rival and the show with some ravishing ensembles. Jo achieves her nefarious purpose after many a slip between cup and lip and all ends happily.

"The Sacred Flame"  
—St. Martin's, November 22nd.

"Under the Counter"  
—Phoenix, November 22nd.

"Skipper Next to God"  
—Embassy, November 27th.

"Dear Murderer"  
—Granville, November 28th.

"Worm's Eye View"  
—Embassy, December 4th.

"Spring, 1600"  
—Lyric, Hammer-smith, December 6th.

(Left)  
Cicely Courtneidge and  
Jeanne Stuart in a scene  
from *Under the Counter*,  
at the Phoenix Theatre.



Some five numbers add tunefulness to the proceedings, without holding up the action unduly. "The Moment I Saw You" is a sentimental duet that should prove popular, and Miss Courtneidge also scores heavily in "Ai Yi Yi." F.S.

(See also *Whispers from the Wings*, on page 32).

### "Spring, 1600"

**M**R. Emlyn Williams's revised version of *Spring, 1600* had a very good reception. It has been skilfully and delightfully produced by the author and special music by Herbert Menges enhances its romantic appeal. The story concerns Burbage's struggles to keep his company together and pay for the Globe Theatre. It shews how a young lady, dazzled by his name, seized a chance opportunity and fled from her home and her wedding arrangements and went off with the wrangle, taggle gipsies, O, joining Burbage's company, disguised as a boy, and playing leads with great success, whilst only Mistress Winifred Burbage suspected her sex; and she kept mum. This tale is pleasantly and happily told and we wish we could believe it. Andrew Cruickshank makes Burbage an attractive character in every way and Jessica Spencer very winsomely plays Viola to his Orsino.

The picturesque squalor of Burbage's house in Shoreditch and the fine range of costumes are the work of Michael Weight.

Some interesting portraits and stage designs by Anthony Mendleson are on exhibition in the Dress Circle Bar.

H.G.M.

### "Skipper Next to God"

**S**KIPPER *Next to God* deals with the dilemma of a Bible Christian who wants to help the Jews. The author, Jan De Hartog, himself plays, with power and sincerity, the part of Captain Joris Kuiper, who has undertaken to convey one hundred and forty-six Jewish refugees from political oppression in Europe to a South American port. On arrival, the immigration authorities will not receive them and the ship has to put to sea again. After several attempts to land in the United States, all prevented by authority, human endurance is seen to be tautly stretched. Even the captain's hitherto unshaken faith in his private contact with divine intelligence needs external support. This is supplied by a cable from his wife, whereupon he sends out S.O.S. signals and scuttles his ship. He, his crew and passengers, it is left to be inferred, are to be picked up by naval vessels engaged in manoeuvres.

The conflict of the human will with adverse circumstance always provides drama. Many obstinate people believe that God is dictating to them and who shall say He is not? The dilemma of Captain

Joris Kuiper is a real one, shared by all thinking people. If a solution is ever to be found, its general character must be closely and widely studied. Towards this end, the present play performs a service.

H.G.M.

### "Worm's Eye View"

**W**ORM'S *Eye View* is a light-hearted, vivacious entertainment, in which a good time is had by all; with the possible exception of Christopher Banks, who sacrifices himself for the general good by playing the Worm. Mr. R. F. Delderfield has included many well-tried, nourishing ingredients in his comedy. Besides the Worm already mentioned, there is the comic landlady, Cinderella, a Fairy Godmother transmuted into an airman and a Corporal Charming. In addition, Ronald Shiner, who produces, plays a part which must be after his own heart—he plays it so brilliantly, adding zest to rather a plain script. It is praise to say that the play recalls memories of "The Wind and the Rain" and, further back, "Peg o' my Heart." Diana Dawson has all the charm that the Peg part requires, which is considerable nowadays.

H.G.M.

### "Dear Murderer"

**T**HE Grand Guignol recipe was not intended for a three course dramatic meal but the experiment made in *Dear Murderer* by St. John L. Clowes to extend the sharp assault to three rounds is extremely interesting even if its repetition does not seem necessary. The One Act form is more shocking. One can get used to anything and in the course of a long play one gets used to the erratic behaviour of stage malefactors.

The story is interesting. The murder is one of vengeance by a jealous husband. Almost immediately after the victim has been arranged to look like a suicide, the murderer is made to realise that he has liquidated, in a cruel and protracted manner, a lover of whom his wife has tired. Patiently the husband sets to work to plant heavy suspicion of guilt on his victim's successor; with success. Oddly enough, his conscience is troubled by the knowledge of the second man's innocence. More oddly, the idea of killing his wife does not occur to him. Oddest of all, this voluptuous lady is not a whit abashed nor even a little nervous to be keeping house with a murderer. She is the female of the species and disposes of her mate in the last act. Miss Shelagh Furley, who well played this part, wore dresses by arrangement with Gainsborough Films, was called Vivien Warren and did not disgrace her dramatic namesake. (Did the author arrange with Mr. Shaw to share a name?) Mr. John Allen once again deserved gratitude for portraying a human worm in manner to spare our blushes.

H.G.M.



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## As We Go to Press

*Worm's Eye View*, reviewed on the previous page, has been transferred to the Whitehall Theatre, where, on December 20th, it was joined in a double bill by *Fit for Heroes*, the delightful comedy starring Dame Irene Vanbrugh and Raymond Lovell, which was also an Embassy Theatre production.

A revival of *Dear Octopus* followed *Skipper Next to God* and *Worm's Eye View* at the Embassy.

\* \* \*

At the invitation of the Arts Council, the Old Vic is forming a new company, whose headquarters will be the Theatre Royal, Bristol. The theatre is leased by the Arts Council, who will continue the management during the tenancy of the Old Vic.

The Old Vic has appointed Hugh Hunt as producer of the Bristol season. He has just been demobilised from the army, in which he has served as Major with the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Hugh Hunt made his name as producer at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. He also produced *The White Steed*, in New York, and *Shadow and Substance* in London. The leading man will be William Devlin, who acted with the Old Vic before the war and has been serving as Major with the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry.

Each play will run for two weeks at Bristol, followed by one week at Bath and one week at Weston-super-Mare.

\* \* \*

Alastair Sim, Pamela Brown, Robert Harris and Terry Morgan are to appear in *Death of a Rat*, a play with four characters by Jan de Hartog, which will follow *Spring, 1690* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in the middle of January. Like the author's *Skipper Next to God*, at the Embassy Theatre, *Death of a Rat*, which is set in Amsterdam, was written while he was living in occupied Holland. Murray Macdonald will direct.

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*Tommy: Let's see if he wears anything underneath.*

A scene from Act II. *L. to R.:* NICHOLAS PARSONS as Kiwi, EMRYS JONES as Lachie, MARGARETTA SCOTT as Sister Margaret, JERRY VERNO as Tommy, JOHN McLAREN as Yank and FRANK LEIGHTON as Digger.

## “The Hasty Heart”

### AT THE ALDWYCH

**T**HIS is a play to conjure up laughter and tears in big doses and one of the few with a war angle which have appealed to London's playgoers. John Patrick has set his play in a convalescent ward of a British General Hospital in the rear of the Assam-Burma Front, where we meet a group of men of various nationalities, each one drawn with a sure touch. The only woman in the piece is Sister Margaret, a real ministering angel and a firm favourite with the men.

Into this ward is brought a young Scotsman, Lachlen, doomed to die in a few weeks as a result of war wounds. The young man, a stubborn and difficult character, ill-disposed towards his fellow men on account of his obscure birth and hard life, does not know that he has at the most six weeks to live. The men find it difficult even to tolerate him but at last his reserve is broken down when they

present him with a birthday gift of full Scottish regalia. All is well until the Colonel tells Lachlen that he has to die. The boy, convinced that the men have befriended him out of pity, turns on them again and it is only at curtain fall that he becomes reconciled.

The acting of all concerned is superlative, and Emrys Jones in the difficult part of Lachlen has caused something of a sensation. The author was himself in Burma, which no doubt accounts for the authenticity of his work, but apart from that he is a new playwright to be watched, for he has a gift of dialogue and an instinct for situation which holds fine promise for his future writing for the theatre.

This is Murray Macdonald's first post-war production after five years in the army and he has not lost the sure touch he revealed in producing *Robert's Wife* (1937) and *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (1938). The play is presented by Firth Shephard.

PICTURES BY HOUSTON ROGERS





*Orderly* : Get washed and get your kit together. All patients to be evacuated.

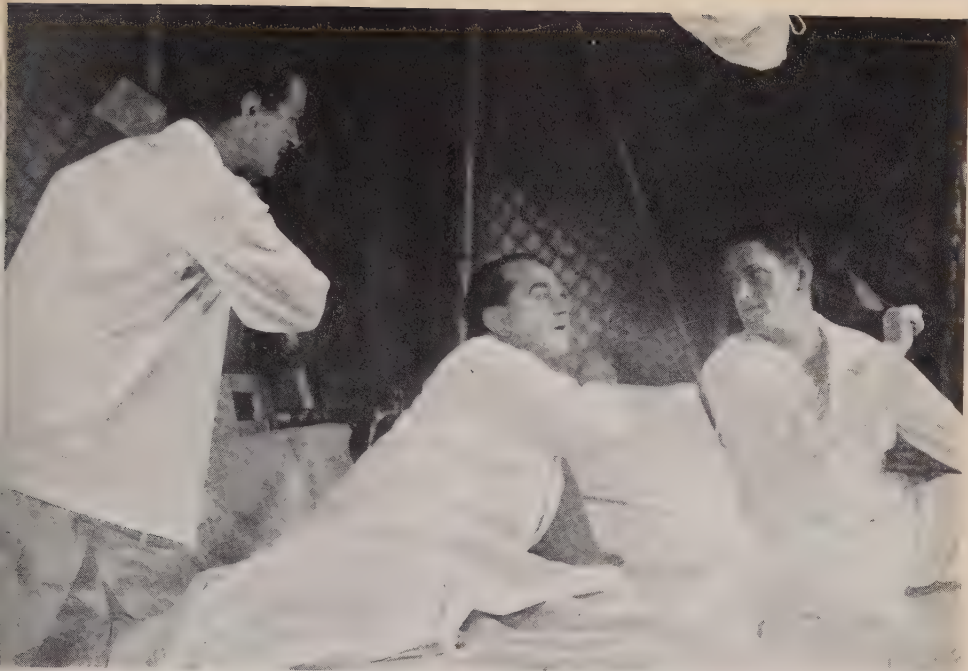
*Yank* : B-b-buster-You're not very funny. Try and think up something d-d-different to-morrow.

The opening scene of the play. The orderly (*Verne Morgan*) is on his routine round waking up the patients.

*Yank* : What beautiful tonsils you have—sister.

Sister Margaret makes her morning inspection. Blossom, a Basuto (*Orlando Martins*), has only one word in his vocabulary — 'Blossom,' but the men treat him with great kindness and understanding.





*Tommy:* Help sister, he's 'litting me again.

*Digger:* I'll spread him all over the ward.

Tommy, the Cockney, and Digger, the Australian, have a friendly set to.



*Margaret:* You're in the paratroops, aren't you,  
Digger? Have you made many jumps?

*Digger:* Twelve. I think I'll just skip the next one.

Digger and the sister have a chat during the morning massage.

*Margaret:* The Colonel said you could sit  
up if you wanted—or get into bed and  
rest. Just as you like.

Lachlen is introduced to the ward  
and the men try to make him feel  
at home.





(Above): *Digger*: Heard it was your birthday, *Lachie*. Thought you might be able to use a pair of brogues. Congratulations.

(Right): *Tommy*: Made in Scotland—it says. 'Appy birthday.



The men, who have found Lachlen almost unbearable, with his humourless jibes, rudeness and bagpipes, are inspired by the sister to make a big effort on the boy's birthday when they present him with full Scotch uniform.



*Kiwi*: You can't wear brogues without stockings. You get corns. The best of luck to you



*Above:* Blossom hands Lachie the Glen-garry bonnet, but Lachie maintains the stolid indifference with which he has received each one of the gifts so far.

(Below): Margaret: Sorry we weren't able to have a haggis for you Lachlan. You're getting quite a collection. God bless.



*Yank* (handing kilt): All the best to you, Lachie.

The little ceremony over and still it seems that Lachie will not respond. At last, however, obviously moved, he rises and thanks them. But he refuses to put on the uniform saying that the fitting occasion will be when he returns to his regiment. It is clear though that the boy has been won over when he offers cigarettes all round, as the curtain falls on Act II, Scene I.





*Margaret*: Have you been as happy with us Lachie as you've ever been in your life?

*Lachie*: I think I've shared a moment wi' kings.

A new Lachie has emerged and the ward is a different place.

(Below) *Margaret*: Don't wriggle, Lachie. I can't keep you in focus.

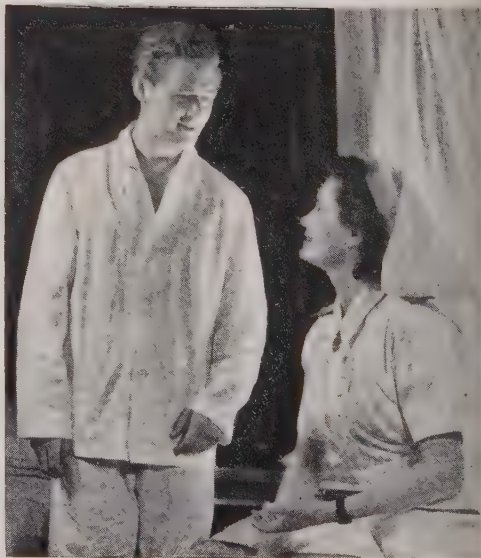
The happy scene when Lachie has been persuaded to appear in all his Scottish splendour to pose for a photograph.



*Lachie*: I was thinking of making a proposal of marriage. I think ye'd best be seated . . . . . I offer ye ma h'ert because it does nae guid wi'out ye.

To Sister Margaret's consternation, Lachie has fallen in love with her. In these few days the boy has begun to mean much in Margaret's life and in view of everything there seems no choice but for her to accept.

Lachie is overjoyed.



*Colonel:* What is the meaning of all this?

The Colonel (Roy Russell) catches the men trying to settle a bet as to what a Scotsman wears under his kilt. He sends the men outside and tells Lachie that it has been officially decided to tell him that he cannot live many more weeks and to send him home by plane if he wishes.



(Above) *Lachie:* I'll be gaen away in the morning. If ye've any decency in ye, will ye kindly nae speak to me. Leave me in peace behind ma' screen. I'll nae wish to sae ye—any of ye.

After hearing the truth from the Colonel, the boy turns on his friends, embittered to think that all they had given him was pity. He has decided to leave, though he has no friends or home to go to.

*Margaret:* Would it mean anything to you if I married you before you went?

Margaret pleads in vain with Lachie before he leaves on his way home.



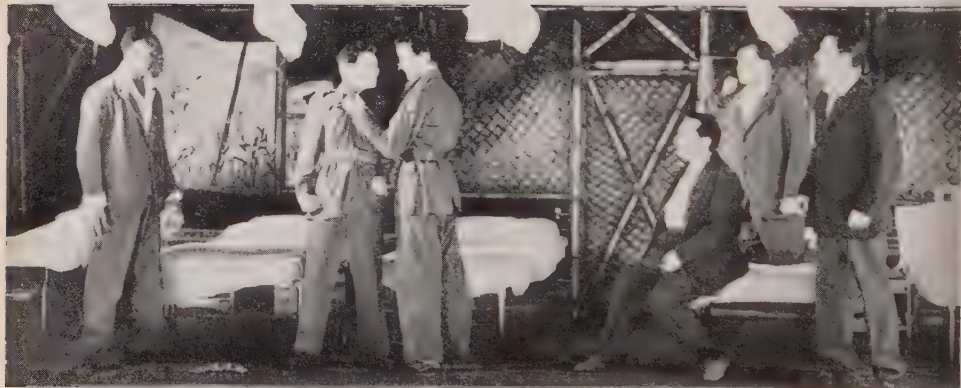


*Left:* The kindly Basuto, who does not understand what has been happening, hands Lachie a parting gift of beads. Lachie rises and throws them against Blossom, who staggers back in hurt surprise.

*Below:*

*Yank:* I wouldn't save you if I could—that's the way I feel.

After the Blossom incident, Yank gives Lachie a piece of his mind. He tells him that Blossom did not know he was going to die so that his motive was not pity when he gave the beads. "It's a good thing you're going to die," Yank shouts in his rage, "a guy like you causes a lot of unhappiness in the world." Lachie turns towards Blossom, then sits at the foot of his bed thinking over what Yank has said.



*Lachie:* I dinna want to die alone.

A moving moment towards the end of the play. Lachie swallows his pride and begs to have his bed back so that he can die among his friends. The curtain falls on a more cheerful scene when Lachie, once more arrayed in his full regalia, poses with his friends while Margaret takes another picture.

# Pastures New

by  
ERIC JOHNS

(Right): Meier Tzelniker, the famous Yiddish actor, makes up for the part of the grandfather in *The Stranger*. Mr. Tzelniker, aged forty-six, is a native of Bessarabia. After the Russian Revolution he joined the Yiddish theatre on the Continent and came to England from South Africa in 1940. Since then he has played in London almost continuously.

(Picture by Mirror Features)



THE West-End is not the first-nighter's ideal hunting ground at the moment. His hobby is not what it was. The boom has distinctly curtailed his activities. Weeks often pass without a withdrawal, leaving no theatre vacant to stage a first night. One cannot expect even an inveterate playgoer to continue seeing the same few shows over and over again, even if they are as good as *The Hasty Heart*, *Henry IV*, and *Lady Windermere's Fan*. There is a limit to such re-visitations, and in any case, the born theatre-goer is always anxious for a new experience.

If the West-End proves fruitless, why not try the East-End? Aldgate is no further than Swiss Cottage or Notting Hill, and the New Yiddish Theatre, housed in the Folk House, Adler Street, can offer theatrical fare every bit as exciting as the Embassy and the Mercury.

Adler Street is a sorry sight. It is just a ruin from end to end, with the exception of the Yiddish Theatre which is the only building that managed to escape the severe bombing to which this area was subjected. At night it shines as a beacon of culture over a vast expanse of devastation. It has survived the debacle and offers the finest productions of Yiddish drama on this side of the Channel.

It was in 1941, when air raids were at their height, that a group of Yiddish players decided to establish this theatre in Aldgate to keep the torch of Yiddish drama burning, despite the rival nightly conflagration caused by the Luftwaffe. It was a question of Jewish Culture versus Nazi Kultur. Their theatre, not being privately owned, is a non-profit-making concern. All surplus money goes back into the exchequer to finance future productions.

The actors, all professional, are probably more closely wrapped up in the cause of the theatre and more deeply devoted to it than any West-End player. They are under yearly contract, entitling them to

a fixed salary. Their livelihood in no way depends on box office returns, nor does choice of play, length of rehearsal, or quality of production depend on financial consideration. No artist can give of his best when worrying about next week's loaf. Nor can he give his best when, in order to live, he has to play in cheap popular trash which fills the house, but destroys his artistic soul.

These Yiddish players live in and for the theatre which is their entire world in a sense quite unknown to the average actor in this country. The top salary, a modest one, of £15 a week, considered astronomical in Adler Street, would meet with a very cool reception in Shaftesbury Avenue. The players are mostly emigrants with the poorest prospects, yet they seem quite content to act in their own language in the plays of their greatest writers, even though they can never hope for stardom such as Laurence Olivier has attained on stage and screen, with all the financial advantage that naturally attends such a position.

In this country there are only about twenty professional Yiddish actors with some years of experience behind them, and fifteen of that number are playing in Adler Street. There is a tendency in certain quarters to "ad lib" on the Yiddish stage, to insert gags on the spur of the moment to win cheap applause, but this company work under the iron discipline of a producer. They play the script as it is written and refuse to tolerate any fooling or departure from the original text.

Their motive has been appreciated, and in consequence they seem to draw the most cosmopolitan audiences in London to their little theatre. Apart from the rich of Hampstead and the poor of Whitechapel, one sees Servicemen and civilians from America, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Holland, and a dozen other countries, all drawn together by the common bond of language, enjoying the play in a warm friendly at-





A  
typical  
pit  
audience  
at the  
New  
Yiddish  
Theatre

mosphere which allows no class distinction. The language need not deter any non-Yiddish speaking playgoer. He will be given a synopsis of the story with his programme, making it quite simple to follow the action of the play. In any case, the graphic gestures of the players and their expressive intonation will leave no doubt as to what is happening on the stage.

Our English theatre dates back to 1576 when Burbage built the first permanent London playhouse, but the Yiddish theatre has only developed during the past seventy years. Abraham Goldfaden is considered the father of the Yiddish Theatre. Before his time Jewish entertainment consisted of a band of minstrels wandering from inn to inn chanting their songs round a table bearing two lighted candles. In 1876 Goldfaden gathered a group of these singers about him, wrote scripts, songs, and music and produced them in a professional manner. They gave their first theatrical performance at Jassi in Rumania, but their immediate difficulty lay in the fact that Jewish women were not permitted by their religion to play on the stage, or even visit the theatre. So, as in Shakespeare's day, their parts had to be played by men. As time passed they triumphed over their difficulties and now the Yiddish Theatre can boast of such magnificent world-famous organisations as the Maurice Schwartz Company.

Goldfaden died in poverty at the age of 68, despite the fact that he wrote about thirty popular plays, regularly performed all over the Jewish-speaking world. The playwright is not protected in the Yiddish Theatre. He receives no royalties. His works can be played to packed houses without a penny coming his way.

The construction of Goldfaden's plays is somewhat novel to the orthodox playgoer

In *The Tenth Commandment*, a comedy written round two men desiring each other's wives, the story is introduced by Manachem Mendl, a well-known fictitious figure of Jewish literature. In a prologue, when he speaks with a statue of Goldfaden, he decides to present *The Tenth Commandment*, and finally introduces the cast and comperes the play. At the end of the first act he brings on characters from other plays by Goldfaden and finally rounds off the proceedings by leading the male members of the cast in the Schmeck Tabac or Snuff-Takers Dance to a haunting song without words. It would be as if an English actor dressed as Falstaff walked on to the stage and promised the audience a play by Pinero. He might choose *The Thunderbolt*, and then in one of the intervals come on and hold discourse with Paula Tanqueray, Iris Bellamy, and Mrs. Ebbsmith, all Pinero heroines, who would, of course, have nothing whatever to do with the action of *The Thunderbolt*. The evening might be enlivened by the actors performing a Morris Dance between the acts, with Falstaff in charge of the revels.

The Yiddish Theatre represents characters from Jewish life. It holds "the mirror up to nature" and reflects poverty, starvation, exile, and darker phases of life which the Sons of Israel know only too well. On the other hand, there is much humour in the plays, easily appreciated even by people who know no Yiddish. Goldfaden was fond of putting over his points in a song, and very gay songs they are, with infectious melodies culled from the synagogues or Jewish folk lore.

Meier Tzelniker, the leading actor of the company playing in Adler Street, started his stage career in Odessa, but eventually

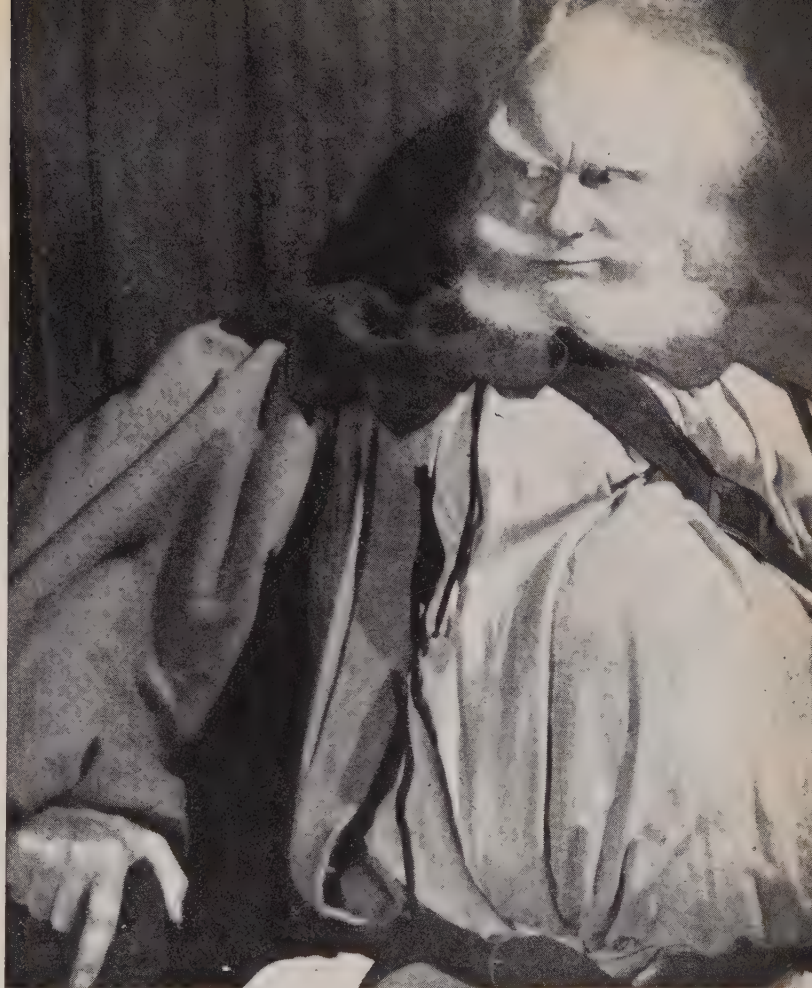
(Continued on page 30)

NEW  
THEATRE

THE  
OLD VIC  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

Staff: A plague  
on all cowards, I say  
still.

RALPH  
RICHARDSON  
as  
Falstaff



## “Henry IV”

PARTS ONE AND TWO

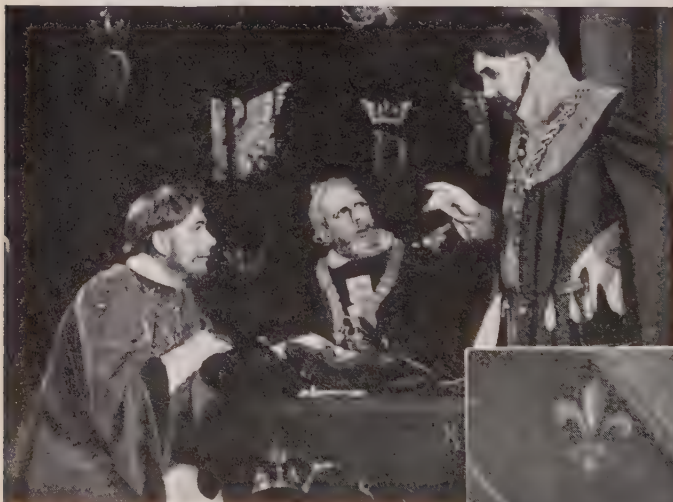
WHEN the Old Vic Theatre Company's second season opened at the New, on September 26th last, all London was electrified by the news of the brilliant production accorded Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part I*. *Part II* followed on October 3rd and was equally acclaimed.

There is something very satisfying in being able to see the two parts played by the same company in sequence and a new understanding is given to the period in English history covered. John Burrell's production adds immeasurably to the vitality of the plays and the incidental music by Herbert Menges is outstanding.

If there had been any doubt after the first season, these two plays confirm the immense stature of Ralph Richardson and Laurence Olivier. This writer at all events cannot imagine a Falstaff more to the life, and Mr. Richardson has earned our eternal gratitude for a most brilliant portrayal of Shakespeare's lovable rogue. Laurence Olivier makes Hotspur in Part I an impetuous and vibrant personality with a little trick of stammer in his speech which makes the man live before our eyes. His Shallow in Part II is a character study of astonishing contrast.

PICTURES  
BY  
JOHN  
TICKERS





*King: Let me not hear you  
speak of Mortimer:  
Send me your prisoners with  
the speediest means.  
Or you shall hear in such  
a kind from me  
As will displease you.*

*L. to R.: Miles Mallen  
son as Northumberland  
Laurence Olivier as Hot-  
spur, Nicholas Hanne-  
as King Henry, Robi  
Lloyd as Prince John  
Peter Copley as Wes-  
moreland. Kenneth  
Edwards as Warwick.*

## Part I

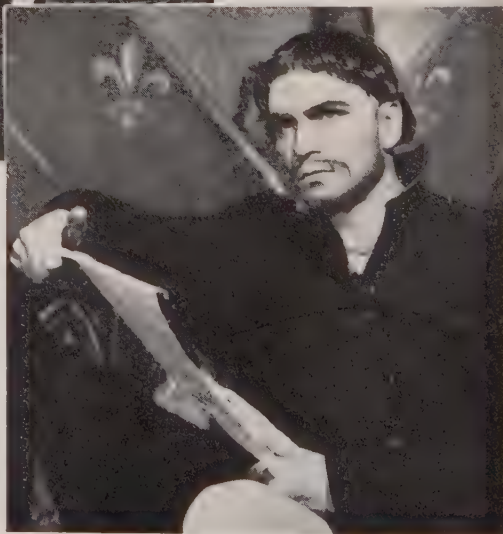
*There:*

*Hotspur: Why, it cannot choose but  
be a noble plot:  
And then the power of Scotland and  
of York  
To join with Mortimer, ha?*

The nobles plot against the King.  
(George Relph as Worcester)

*Right:*

*Hotspur: Out of this nettle, danger,  
we pluck this flower, safety.*





lstaff: Poins! Hal! A plague upon you both!  
 lstaff in the amusing Gadshill scene,  
 then after indulging in some highway  
 robbery with a great show of bravado, he  
 himself the victim of the Prince's  
 practical joke.

*Lady Percy: Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that  
 takes from thee  
 Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?*

Lady Percy chides her husband for his  
 preoccupation with other matters.  
 (Margaret Leighton as Lady Percy)

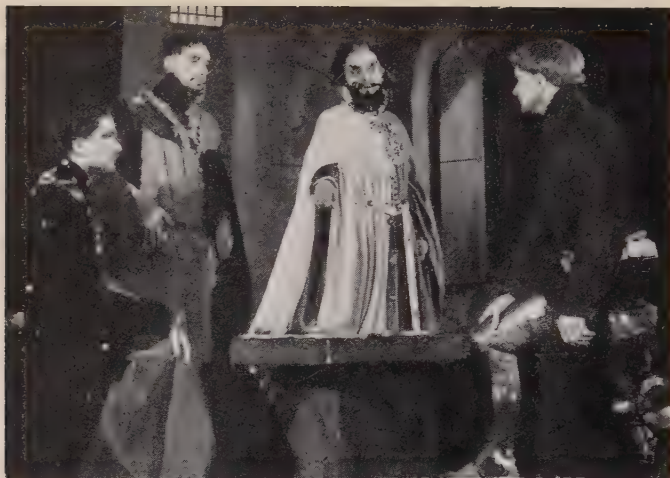
ee: *How now,  
 my lady, the  
 hostess  
 at sayest thou to  
 me?*

lstaff, the  
 nce and Poins  
 et at their  
 ourite haunt,  
 Boars Head  
 vern, in East-  
 cheap.

bil Thorndike  
 Mistress Quick-  
 Michael Warre  
 the Prince and  
 ney Tafler as  
 Poins).







*Glendower: Not wind,  
shall, it must: you see  
doth!*

At Bangor the rebels  
discuss with some help  
the apportionment  
land that shall be the  
after the overthrow  
the King.

(David Kentish as Mor  
mer, Harcourt William  
as Glendower)



*Prince Hal: And God I  
give them that have  
much sway'd*

*Your Majesty's good thought  
away from me.*

The King rebukes his  
son for his irresponsible  
behaviour and the  
Prince, much sobered,  
swears to reform.



*Falstaff: Hostess, my break  
fast, come;*

*O, I could wish this tavern  
were my drum!*

Another jovial scene at  
the Boar's Head Tavern

(Right: Michael Rag  
han as Bardolph)



*King Henry: . . . But if he will not yield  
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,  
And they shall do their office.*

The rival camps before the Battle of Shrewsbury.

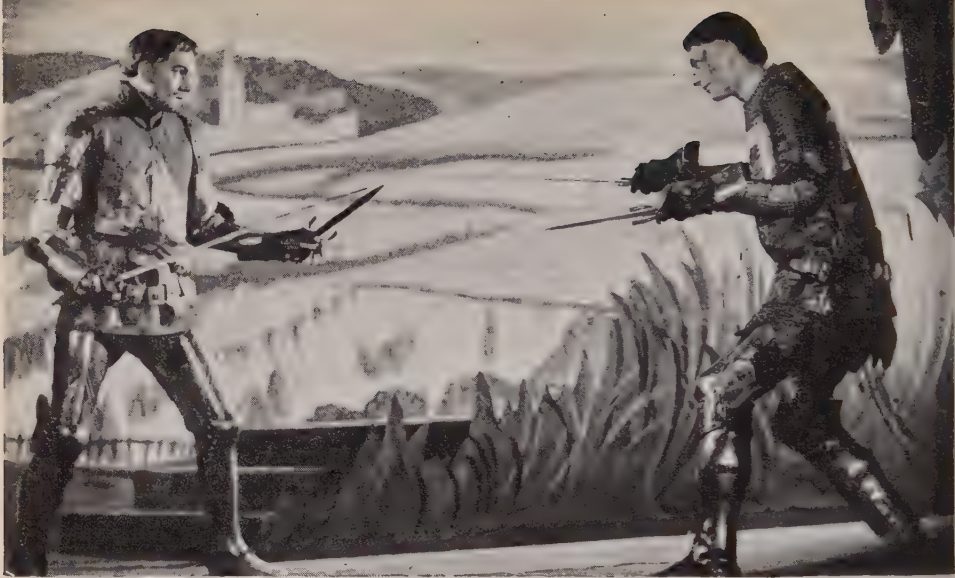


*(Below):*

*Hotspur: Sound all the lofty instruments of war and by that music let us all embrace.*

(Paul Stephenson as Vernon and William Monk as Douglas)





*Hotspur: I can no longer brook thy vanities.*

The desperate fight to the death between Hotspur and the Prince at the Battle of Shrewsbury.



*Prince Hal: Why, Percy I killed myself, and saw thee dead.*

*Falstaff: Didst thou, didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying.*

Falstaff brazenly claims the death of Hotspur as his own work.



*Falstaff: If I do grow great, I'll grow less: for I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman should do.*

A moment towards the end of Part I. The rogue Falstaff carries the body of Hotspur from the battlefield.

## Part II



*Rumour: Open your ears: for which of you will stop The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?*

The opening scene of Part II, before Northumberland's Castle, whither conflicting news is brought of the outcome of the Battle of Shrewsbury.

(Nicolette Bernard as Rumour.)



*Falstaff: Thou whoreson mandrake, thou art fitter to be worn in my cap than at my heels.*

The unrepentant Falstaff and his Page in a London street, just before he is confronted by the Lord Chief Justice over the little matter of the robbery at Gadshill.  
(Brian Parker as Page)





*Pistol: Fear we broadsides? No, let the fiend give you.  
Falstaff: Pistol, I would be quiet!*

Pistol holds forth in the Boar's Head Tavern, much to the disgust of Falstaff and his friends. (George Relph as Pistol and Joyce Redman as Doll Tearsheet).



*Falstaff: What st  
wilt thou have  
kirtle of? I sh  
receive money  
Thursday: thou sh  
have a cap to-mor*

*Sir John and Doll  
in sentimental  
mood.*



A room in the Palace at Westminster. Surrey and Warwick are called to the King, who is much weighed down with the troubles which beset his kingdom.



Laurence Olivier as Justice Shallow.

Right:

Falstaff: *I am glad to see you well, good Master Robert Shallow.*

Falstaff comes to Shallow's house in Gloucestershire in search of recruits.







*Falstaff: 'Fore God, a likely fellow! Come, prick me Bullcalf till he roar again!*

Sir John selects his men. (Joseph James as Bullcalf and right: Miles Malleon as Silence)

*Below: The Coronation Scene. Henry V takes on his kingship with dignity, rebuffing his old rascally friend of a dead past. The closing moments of the play.*



BY OUR  
AMERICAN  
CORRESPONDENT

E.  
MAWBY  
GREEN

Victor Jory, Eva Le Gallienne and Dame May Whitty in a scene from Thomas Job's adaptation *Thérèse*, from Emile Zola's novel *Thérèse Raquin*, which Victor-Payne-Jennings and Bernard Klawans present at the Biltmore Theatre.



## Echoes from Broadway

TWO plays, which London looked at briefly some months ago, have recently showed up on Broadway. Emile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, which took the tilt *Guilty* when dramatized for the West End with Flora Robson, Violet Farebrother and Michael Golden in the leading roles, has emerged as plain *Thérèse* over here and stars Eva LeGallienne, Dame May Whitty and Victor Jory in an adaption by Thomas Job, author of *Uncle Harry*. The other play, Irwin Shaw's *The Assassin*, was cut down quickly by the critics and lasted a scant two weeks.

*Thérèse*, with its theme of illicit love, murder and recriminations, is void of original twists until the last scene and so makes for an only moderately successful melodrama. However, great care has been lavished on the prosaic parts and those theatregoers who appreciate good acting and imaginative direction are getting a full, satisfying evening.

Miss LeGallienne, who certainly is one of America's most interesting and versatile actresses, has, as the passionate and bored *Thérèse* who instigates the murder of her husband, a type of role she does so beauti-

fully. It is a detailed and illuminating performance while Dame May Whitty is no less impressive in the tricky and showy part of the devoted mother of the murdered man who suffers a paralytic stroke yet traps the guilty lovers. As the tormented lover, Victor Jory, is overshadowed by these two brilliant actresses yet, nevertheless turns in a commendable characterization.

If any one person can deserve more credit than another for the success of this production, then this distinction should go to Margaret Webster for her alert and painstaking direction of *Thérèse*. She has instilled into the play a feeling that this is something she and the cast wanted to do and felt worthwhile doing. There is none of the usual Broadway atmosphere that this was done with one eye on the box office and the other on the critics.

*Thérèse*, presented by Victor Payne-Jennings and Bernard Klawans, received lukewarm notices but is getting gratifying support from the paying public.

*The Assassin*, Irwin Shaw's semi-historic play based on the assassination of Admiral Darlan in 1942 by a young Royalist, seemed



very remote and dated though only three years have elapsed since this incident made the headlines. It also happened to be a very unuspenseful melodrama so its quick demise was more or less inevitable. The two or three good speeches and dramatic moments did not compensate for the many more pedestrian passages, and the ponderous direction, which treated the play as if it were a tragedy of stature, made it at times rather ridiculous. However, *The Assassin* served to introduce to the American stage a young Swedish actor, Frank Sundstrom, who is under contract to David O. Selznick and should have a more pronounced success in Hollywood.

In matters musical, *Polonaise* pulled into town to a tremendous advance sale primarily on the strength of its celebrated Polish combination. Jan Kiepura, Marta Eggerth and Frederic Chopin, only to receive an appalling panning from the press.

This quarter of a million dollar musical has undergone one of the worst artistic butcherings in recent years. The story has to do with the Polish patriot, Thaddeus Kosciuszko (Jan Kiepura), a couple of revolutions, a peasant girl (Marta Eggerth) and a wicked countess (Rose Inghram). Hung on to this dreary tale are Chopin's immortal melodies but in the hands of this orchestra, these arrangers and singers they become mortal and vulnerable. Chopin, as everyone knows, is famous for his incomparable piano passages so it is incredible that the original orchestrations for *Polonaise* called for no piano part. Not until a week before the New York premiere, when a last minute overhaul of the production was taking place, did the management decide to stick in a piano. This accounts for the best fifteen minutes of the show when it is heard in the "Nocturne in F. Sharp Major" and the "Polonaise in A Flat."

Mr. Kiepura's answer to the reviewers who bludgeoned him was: "For fifteen years the critics have panned me, but I get greater each year." His wife, Marta Eggerth, had no cause to reply to the press for she hit a more friendly reception. But in spite of all the bad things that have been said about *Polonaise*, the Kiepuras and Chopin are playing to capacity.

In a season that has yet to yield a really outstanding show, a pleasant and agreeable evening, is provided by Paula Stone and Hunt Stromberg Jr's revival of Victor Herbert's *The Red Mill* which is developing into a hit of smash proportion.

This revival, which was put together in Hollywood, has brought in three wonderful comedians: Michael O'Shea, Eddie Foy, Jr. and Odette Myrtil as well as a fresh line of chorus girls who have a glow of California sunshine about them and not the usual New York nightclub pallor. Add to this the

lovely Victor Herbert melodies: "Every Day is Ladies' Day with Me," "In Old New York," "Because You're You," and "Isle Of Our Dreams" and several others of hit calibre and you have the answer to this unexpected success.

*The Red Mill* was first presented in America in 1906 with the famous comedy team of Dave Montgomery and Fred Stone and has not been seen around Broadway since.

For one week, Pulitzer Prize winner Mary Chase for her current comedy *Harvey*, had two plays running on Broadway at the same time. The other was a drama with an Irish folk tale flavour, *The Next Half Hour*, but despite some highly competent writing lacked sufficient substance and dramatic power to sustain three acts. The part of Margaret Brennan, an Irish-American mother steeped in the superstitions of the old country, coaxed from the coast Fay Bainter, who has not been seen on the local boards since *Dodsworth*, some ten years ago. Actresses of Miss Bainter's talents are too scarce to be frittered away in films and it is to be hoped she finds another stage role to her liking soon.

Oscar Serlin, producer of *Life With Father* now in its seventh year, is still searching for another success—even a small one. His latest effort, *Beggars Are Coming To Town* by Theodore Reeves, will not end the quest. Against a gangster-nightclub background, the author has approached his theme in two distinct styles: one melodramatic and the other satiric. They pull against each other and the play down with it. This is unfortunate, for all the ingredients for a hit are there including fine acting by Paul Kelly, Luther Adler and Dorothy Comingore and an immaculate production designed and lighted by Jo Mielziner.

## Pastures New (Continued)

adopted Yiddish drama as his medium of acting. His colourful stage presence has won instant recognition in London, where he draws a large public from all parts. At the moment he is writing, and will subsequently produce, a *Cavalcade* of Jewish life in Europe from 1939 to 1945. The play, based on fact and not propaganda, will depict the triumph of Jewry under the Nazi yoke. Later in the year he hopes to appear as Shylock in a Yiddish production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

No playgoer can claim complete knowledge of the London stage until he has paid a visit to the East-End to experience the vivid acting of these artists who literally devote their entire existence to the theatre without any hope of being able to retire with a fortune in the bank. They are content to carry on in harness because they have a job which means everything to them, even though it only just permits them to keep body and soul together. In other words, they are artists in the truest sense of the word.



*Stepmother*: Girls, girls, your father's come home.

Sara Gregory as Cinderella, Lawrence Manray as Father, Joan Sterndale Bennett as Araminta, Elsie French as Stepmother and Olga May as Arethusa, in Robert's presentation of Herbert and Eleanor Farjeon's charming pantomime.

## “The Glass Slipper” AT THE ST. JAMES'S

*(Right):*

*Herald*: Parents also are requested to attend.

Geoffrey Dunn as the Herald in another amusing moment from *The Glass Slipper*, which tells the story of Cinderella in a new and delightful way.

*Pictures by Edward Mandinian.*



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# Whispers from the Wings

BY  
LOOKER ON

**A**LTHOUGH you don't actually see Jack Hulbert in *Under the Counter*, you cannot see the show without feeling his influence as the power "behind the scenes. With the brain of a born showman he has conceived a new form of theatrical fare, a comedy-with-music, which turns out to be the finest vehicle ever devised for Cicely Courtneidge. Like Bud Flanagan and Ethel Revnell, she wins fresh laurels without her familiar partner at her side.

The Hulberts are never content to serve up the same show-formula year after year. Cicely, who goes to every straight play in London, has been coveting a high comedy part for some time. When she had to make up her mind about this new show she said she could not "give up everything" for a strictly, straight play, so Jack struck a happy medium—a play-with-songs, subsequently supplied by Arthur Macrae.

Except for the comparatively small part of Peggy Bassett in *Lido Lady*, Cicely has never previously appeared as herself on the stage. As Jo Fox, the famous musical comedy star in *Under the Counter*, she discards all the heavy disguises which were such a characteristic feature of her

work in those memorable Palace and Adelphi successes. Now she is as glamorously groomed as any Hollywood heroine and we discover those former school-marm wigs and thick country tweeds hid a rare elegance. She has all the allure of Gertrude Lawrence, Beatrice Lillie, and those other artists who have so skilfully allied beauty to buffoonery.

At last Cicely has a real story instead of a series of disconnected revue situations. As the famous actress preparing a new show, she quite naturally invites the chorus girls to her home to go through their numbers. It is a regular occurrence in Cicely's own life. While in the throes of rehearsal she takes the girls back to her tasteful house in Curzon Street, leaving Jack in the theatre to concentrate on other aspects of the production.

By this clever device the five musical numbers in the show grow quite naturally out of the situations. The plot is not held up while hero and heroine make love to music. The numbers are part and parcel of the story, without the absurd artificiality of the conventional musical comedy song. They are all quite feasible. Surely it would be odd if a leading lady and the chorus met for rehearsal without breaking into song!

Cicely has never worked harder in her life. Jo Fox is the longest part she has ever played, scarcely allowing her off the stage all evening. It is a new experience for her, to play without Jack Hulbert, without an ever-changing background, and without all the elaborate supporting paraphernalia of musical comedy tradition.

Never has she been seen to better advantage. She confesses the furniture rather bewildered her at first. All her life she has worked in musical shows where the heroine never sits down. She played her parts standing up, walking about the stage, or dancing with the girls. Now she works in a set as cosy as her own Mayfair drawing room. That set, so cleverly designed by Clifford Pember, is as handsome as it is unique. The three acts take place in one spacious room, seen from three angles, as if we sat in different chairs and so obtained three contrasting aspects of the same room.

*Under the Counter* is half-way to a straight play. It is more than likely that in her next show Cicely will try cutting out songs altogether. Backed by her established reputation as a clown, the audience anticipates her being funny as soon as she comes on the stage, so her play will have to be very carefully written for her. She will be a credit to any author who has the wit to provide her with a good vehicle. If it really is a good Courtneidge vehicle the public will only too readily patronise it for hundreds of nights.

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# Ballet at Tunbridge Wells

A fine action study of EMENTINA STUART, 18-year-old ballet dancer who died with Madame Legat. s Stuart recently appeared in Paris with an ENSA company, and danced the Merina role of the Swan Queen in *Swan Lake, Act* in a performance by the Great School, in Tunbridge Wells, in December.



JOYCE HERON  
who plays the part of Joan Deal in the clever thriller at St. Martin's Theatre. *The Shop at Sly Corner* reached its 300th performance on December 29th.



PATRICIA MORNE  
charming singer and dancer, returned to *Revuedeille*, at the Windmill Theatre, on December 31st. *Revuedeille* has now reached its fifteenth year.



JEAN COMPTON MACKENZIE,  
sister-in-law of the late Leslie Howard and niece of Fay Compton, has important parts in the Rock Theatre Company's Rudolf Steiner Hall repertory.



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## Amateur Stage

A CONSIDERABLE number of operatic societies are re-forming with a view to productions in 1946. It is opportune, therefore, to urge upon them once again the essential precaution of ensuring in good time that the play they have in mind is available for amateurs, also that the necessary costumes and scenery will be available. Committees must realise that the war years have altered conditions considerably, and this refers to more matters than the inevitable increase in prices. Many pre-war favourites with operatic societies have been withdrawn from amateur performance; many sets of costumes and scenery no longer exist. So check up several months before production that your musical play is a possible one, before commitments are incurred.

Is a word of caution in place for organisers of drama conferences, where several speakers are listed to give addresses on stage subjects? It is that there is a danger of one speaker cancelling out another, in the sense that Mr. A. will advocate a certain course of action, while an hour or two later Mr. B. will rise to champion the exact opposite. No doubt controversy and argument can be healthy and constructive, but it is apt to be rather confusing for the inexperienced

(Continued on page 36)

## WELWYN DRAMA FESTIVAL

(Welwyn Garden City, Herts.)

After a war interval of five years the Welwyn Festival and competition for One-Act Plays performed by amateur companies will restart with the 13th Annual Festival during May or June, 1946.

The exact date with other details will be announced early in the New Year.

The major competition, which will follow the general lines of past years, is for the Welwyn Cup (Holders 1940: St. Albans Saturday Club) and the customary other awards, including the New Play Prize, will be made.

Preliminary enquiries from old and new friends will be welcomed by ROY BREWER (*Hon. Sec.*), 6, Attimore Close, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

Welwyn Garden 220

## Gutter Orchid"

IN the week beginning 4th December the Amersham Repertory Theatre celebrated its four hundredth production, and the return of its founder and leading actress, Sally Latimer, from America, with a play about the famous 19th century French actress, Rachel, who took Paris by storm at the height of the Romantic Period and evoked from Charlotte Bronte the flaming passages in *Villette* which stamp the actress as the laughter of a Jewish pedlar and the passionate little governess bred of English Protestantism with a kindred genius.

It is the contemporary descriptions of Rachel, in which the very words seem to take fire from the actress's fevered spirit, that must defeat any attempt to put the character adequately on the stage. "Rachel," wrote her finest chronicler, George Henry Lewes, "was the panther of the stage; with a panther's terrible beauty and undulating grace she moved and stood, glared and sprang." Of her entrance as Phedre the same writer commented "you felt she was wasting away under the fire within." "She does not act, she suffers," wrote another; and through all the commentaries burns an apprehension of that quality that repelled and fascinated Charlotte Bronte and which Lewes defined as "an indefinable suggestion of latent wickedness."

How pack into the two hours traffic of the stage, and make credible as genius and woman, this wasting figure of passion and agony, this plain and at times vulgar little Jewess whom acting could transform into a creature of panther-like beauty

(Continued overleaf)

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### Amateur Stage (Continued)

member of the audience seeking guidance on play production.

Dramatic societies seeking the one-set, evenly balanced small cast, domestic type of straight play will be well advised to keep their eyes on *Young Mrs. Barrington*, now settled into its professional run at the Winter Garden Theatre. The author, Warren Chetham Strode, has nothing epoch making to say but he has caught the demobilisation mood and told his family story with economy and to good effect.

A new comedy, *Too Many Cooks*, by Joan Brampton, was produced in December by an amateur group at the Castle Theatre, Farnham. This was the second work by the same author to be done by the company—the previous month a social play, *The Younger Greysmith*, was produced. Miss Brampton was the author of the sketch, *Maid Marion*, produced in 1946, in a Green Room Club Rag, with Jerry Verno in the lead.

### "Gutter Orchid" (Continued)

with the seductiveness of Jezebel and the suffering regality of a Grecian queen? Messrs. Dinner and Morum, authors of *Gutter Orchid*, have caught something of the double strain in their title and, helped more than somewhat by Sally Latimer, an actress of raw nerves, swift power and intense sincerity of feeling, have succeeded in producing some domestic storms in a teacup that hold the interest in Rachel and her prolific family, whom she treated with reckless generosity, without ever coming really close to the dominating influence of the drama which was the fountainhead of her genius and in whose service she burnt herself out by the early age of 37. Some flashes in Sally Latimer's acting only give a glimpse of the greater Rachel the authors have missed. With Alfred De Musset they have not even this partial success, and it is impossible to link this grave, staid figure, gliding in through balcony windows to discourse on love and moonlight, with the mercurial, fascinating, sensitive young poet who drowned his bruised soul in absinthe and sordidity and produced some of the most radiant and tormented of French poetry.

The actresses at Amersham heavily out-scored the actors, the women of the Felix household being well delineated, with a Jewish emphasis their menfolk lacked. In the unrewarding part of Eugénie di Montijo Katie Kemp, a young actress of great charm who has done work at Amersham, skimmed through her short scenes as radiantly as a bird over sunlit waters, and Caryl Jenner's production gave the play a taut pace the authors have also preserved in their dialogue. The play does, in fact, suggest that the authors may one day write a good one when they learn not to allow their reach to exceed their grasp. A.W.

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